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ABSTRACT

This report attempts to identify some communication problem areas in the Austin Independent School District, based on an open-ended interview questionnaire and a network analysis. Guidelines based on a review of the literature are included for communicators at all levels of the organizational structure. Backup summaries of that review are also presented. Sample checklists and instruments for evaluation of some communications areas form an appendix. (Author/PGD)

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EA 010 583

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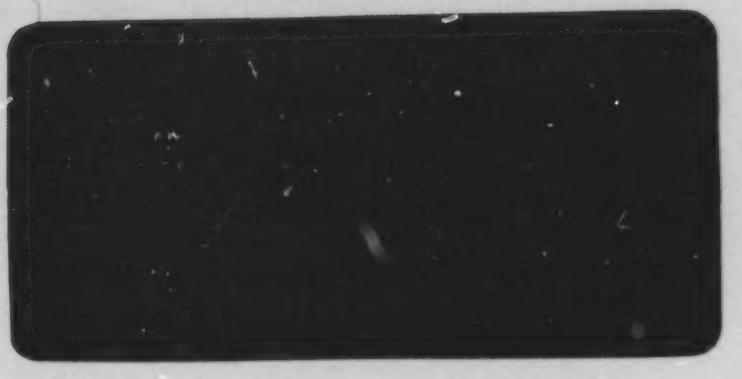

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1974 - 75

EVALUATION REPORT

Internal Communication Study

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ABSTRACT

This report attempts to identify some communication problem areas in the Austin Independent School District based on an Open-Ended Interview Questionnaire and a network analysis. Included in this report are guidelines for communicators in different positions in the organizational structure which have been drawn from a communication literature review. Backup summaries of that review are also included. Finally, are some sample checklists and instruments for evaluation of some communication areas.

DECISION QUESTIONS

DECISION QUESTIONS ADDRESSED

SYSTEM-LEVEL DECISION QUESTIONS

1. Should there be changes in internal methods of communication in the district?

   Recommendation:

   There should be changes in the internal methods of communications of the District.

   Basis for Recommendation:

   The interview questionnaire responses indicate many needs in this area.

2. If so, what changes should occur?

   Recommendations:

   A. The School Board should:

      1. Actively support the Superintendent's efforts to design an ideal communication system for AISD.
      2. Actively support a climate of trust and respect between the School Board and AISD employees.
      3. Establish effective channels of communication with AISD employees.

   B. The Superintendent should:

      1. Appoint a task force to design an ideal communication system for the AISD and he should give his active support to this force.
      2. Actively support a training program for all Departmental and Divisional persons to inform them of the responsibilities of each division and office of the district with respect to communication.
      3. Actively support a climate of trust and respect among administrators and employees to facilitate communication.
      4. Actively support further study of the present communication system of AISD and its difficulties and possible solutions.

   Basis for Recommendations:

   The interview questionnaire indicates the needs in this area and the literature review supports the recommendations.

DIVISION AND DEPARTMENT LEVEL DECISION QUESTIONS

1. Should there be department or division level changes in methods of communication in the district?

   Recommendation:

   There should be changes in department or division level communications.

   Basis for Recommendation:

   The interview questionnaire and the preliminary needs survey last year indicate there are needs in this area.

2. If so, what changes should occur?

   Recommendations:

   A. The Deputy Superintendent should:

      1. Make a real effort to release information about instructional programs and innovations to everyone in AISD at the same time.
      2. Give further support to across divisional planning and coordination.
      3. See that goals and objectives of schools, programs, and innovations are communicated to everyone involved (teachers, secretaries, principals, central office administrators).
      4. Continue and increase the current emphasis on upward communication from the schools and staffs.

   B. Department and Division heads should:

      1. Realize that a change is needed.
      2. Make an exact list of all communicating done by their office, to whom it is done, and by whom it is done and for what purpose. Compile a list of all duties performed and send it to all other offices and schools, so that they will know who to contact about specific matters.
      3. Provide divisional or departmental training of clerks and secretaries, so that they know not only their job, but also what others in their office do.
      4. Continue to actively create a climate of trust and respect among your own staff members and between your staffs and others in the District.

5. Eliminate some of your overload by passing things down when you receive them, not a week later.
6. Do a cursory self-study of your department or office by using the instruments in the appendix.
7. Compile a mailing list of all departments/offices/schools with whom you communicate. Send copies of the list to everyone and request they add their name if they need your information and are not currently on the list or scratch off their name if they do not need your mailings.

Basis for Recommendations:

The interview questionnaire and the literature review indicate both problems and possible solutions in the area of recommendation.

SCHOOL-LEVEL DECISION QUESTIONS

1. Should there be school-level changes in methods of communications with respect to District information?

Recommendation:

There should be changes in the school-level communication.

Basis for Recommendation:

The interview questionnaire indicates the needs in this area. As does the preliminary inquiries of 1973-74.

2. If so, what changes should occur:

Recommendation:

Currently, the Office of Research and Evaluation can only indicate that there is a need for change. Our limited resources do permit our studying the individual school communication systems. Principals are encouraged, however, to use the literature review and the checklists provided in the appendix to analyze and improve their own school's communication.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

In the spring of 1974, the Office of Research and Evaluation conducted a survey of teachers, principals, central office administrative staff, and PTA presidents in order to obtain input for assisting the Directors of the Division of Instruction and Development in the selection of evaluation priorities for the coming year. That is, recognizing the scarcity of resources for obtaining evaluation the Division wished to carry out that evaluation which would serve the information needs of the greater number of persons and groups in the district.

Among those areas which consistently rated high both in the overall sample and in subgroup samples was that of "Communication in the System." It appeared that there was a generalized concern and that evaluation information would be of importance to the system.

The importance of the concern felt by so many individuals in the AISD organization for communication effectiveness is validated in the literature on organizational theory:

> A social system must communicate to survive and grow. Communication is the means for providing information which permits the system or subsystem to change, grow, and achieve its goals.[1]

Congruently, school systems are:

> . . . being inundated by paper work, record keeping, legal documents, reports, information processing and storage demands, and the like.[2]

These symptoms reflect the attempts of the system to satisfy the various demands of communication placed on it; that these attempts are, in fact, often dysfunctional may reflect the lack of knowledge available about "organizational communication systems." Most

---

[1] Gordon L. Lippitt, Organizational Renewal, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969), p. 52.

[2] Thomas J. Sergiovanni, "The Superintendency and Organizational Survival," The Administrator, Vol. 1, No. 3, Spring 1971, p. 5.

of the theory that administrators have learned about communications relates to person-to-person or small group communication and is phased in such terms as "encoder," "decoder," and "message transmission"; but:

> While such a simple description of the communication process describes the rudiments of a nose-to-nose dialogue with immediate feedback, it over-simplifies the complexities involved in the internal communication of a large organization.[3]

Despite our lack of knowledge about structuring effective organizational communication systems, the need is nevertheless imperative:

> Communication is the life blood of an organization; in fact, an organization cannot function in a healthy manner unless all members can communicate satisfactorily with one another. The first duty of an administrator, then, is to develop and maintain a system of communication that provides for an upward flow to benefit the implementation of policy, and an easy horizontal flow to facilitate coordination of all parts of the organization. (Emphasis added)[4]

B. EVALUATION DESIGN

This evaluation was undertaken in an attempt to provide the system with information that would assist administrators with the task of communicating. Because this was evaluation at an exploratory point prior to the existence of a formal "communications program" as such, it can be labeled as a "preparatory evaluation." The intent of the evaluation was to provide baseline information upon which program objectives in each of the system areas "inputs, processes, outcomes," might be generated. It was conducted in compliance with the plan set out in the document, Evaluation Design for Communication Study, 1974-75 (Holley, Skinner, et al.).

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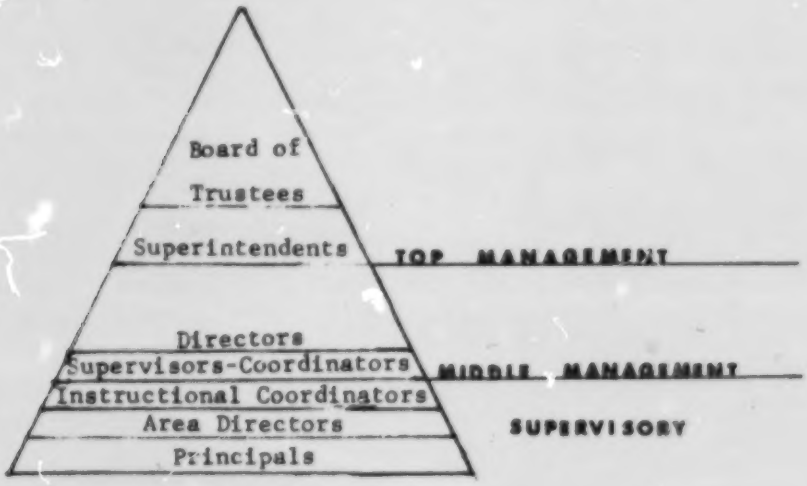
[3]James C. King, "Editorial on Internal Communications Issue," The Administrator, Vol. 2, #3, Spring 1972, p. 3.

[4]Harold Van Winkle, "Communication Needs of the Formal Organization," The Administrator, Vol. 2, #3, Spring 1972, p. 3.

As one begins to study the communication in a school district, it becomes apparent that the task is a very large one. In order to narrow the task to a manageable size, therefore, the evaluation for the 1974-75 school year was focused on Internal Communications only.



Formal communication follows the organizational structure and for that reason, problems of misinterpretation arise such as the one pictured on the next page. Communication is, in a very real sense, a personal as well as an organizational problem. One major characteristic of organizational communication turns out to be the formal and informal networks of communication. In addition, the many methods and forms of communication can be studied individually.

Within its limited time and resources, the Office of Research and Evaluation has this year conducted a study limited to the following areas:

- an interview survey of a cross-section sampling of people on several organizational levels.
- a network analysis of the flow and frequency of communication between 348 administrators and secretaries.
- a literature study of the current material on organizational communication.

This has led to the initial identification of some major problem areas.

AS TEACHERS REQUESTED IT

AS COORDINATORS ORDERED IT

AS CURRICULUM STAFF WROTE IT

AS THE ART DEPARTMENT DESIGNED IT

AS TEACHERS IMPLEMENTED IT

WHAT THE STUDENT WANTED

The evaluation includes a network analysis of administrators and secretaries. This will indicate the flow of communication in the district and where problems lie in this respect.

The literature review was utilized to establish guidelines for communicating from specific job positions to help reduce some of the initial problems of communication and to provide an idea of how others have handled similar problems. Finally, checklists, such as the one on the next page, are included for use in individual offices or departments to give a very tentative view of the communication atmosphere of the department/office and to identify communication strengths and weaknesses.

It is hoped that this evaluation report can serve both as a stimulation to further diagnosis and improvement of the district's communication system as well as contribute some specific instruments and aids to assist in this process.

COMMUNICATION SELF-IMPROVEMENT LOG

DATE_____		DATE_____
WHAT IS MY COMMUNICATION PROBLEM(S)?	WHAT CAN I DO TO IMPROVE THIS?	HAVE I IMPROVED? (If not, what additional actions can I take?)

OPEN-ENDED INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE INSTRUMENT
DESCRIPTION

To whom was the instrument administered?

33 respondents from a cross-section sampling of the District from central office administrators to teachers and secretaries.

How many administrations were given?

One

When was the instrument administered?

January 27, 1975 - February 28, 1975

Who administered the instrument?

The Communications Project Evaluator

What training did the administrators have?

B.A. and M.A. degrees in Speech Communication

Was the instrument administered under standardized conditions?

No

Were there problems with the instrument or the administration that might affect the validity of the data?

No

Brief description of the instrument

Contains 27 open-ended questions concerning the methods of communication in the District. A copy is appended.

Who developed the instrument?

Communications Project Evaluator.

What reliability and validity data are available on the instrument?

None

Are there norm data available for interpreting the results?

No

OPEN-ENDED INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE REPORT

This questionnaire was designed to structure an interview with a cross-section of administrators and staff. The respondents included Assistant Directors, Instructional Coordinators, Supervisors, Coordinators, Principals, and Secretaries.

Of the 33 respondents, 16 had not worked in another school system and 17 had worked in another school system. Sixteen have been with the Austin Independent School District 5 years or less, 7 have worked for the District 5-10 years, 4 have worked for the District 10-15 years, 3 have been with the District 15-20 years, and 3 have worked for the District more than 20 years.

When asked if they felt the primary goals of the District programs were communicated to them 19 said "yes," 7 said "no," 2 said "it could be done better," 3 said "sometimes," and 2 said they knew office goals, but not the district goals.

When asked if they received enough formal information about programs they were involved in 15 said "yes," 12 said "no," and 3 said "sometimes." The remaining 3 only indicated how they received their information which was the last half of the question. Memos were the most used method of communicating to people with meetings being the second most used method. The telephone was rated as a low 3rd.

Most of these people attend meetings dealing with their own special area or with their extracurricular activities (such as a steering committee, task force, secretary workshop). The next most attended meetings were the Faculty and General Principal meetings. Twenty-six said they receive notification of these meetings early enough to plan their schedules, 2 indicated this was true most of the time, and 5 said they did not receive enough notification.

When asked if they received information in these meetings that was applicable:

a) to their job, 29 said yes and 4 said seldom.
b) to their understanding of the system, 27 said yes, 5 said no, and 1 said seldom.
c) to District policy, 26 said yes, 6 said no, 1 said seldom.

When asked if they had sufficient input of information into the District 23 said yes and 10 said no. Twenty-six said they

had enough input in their school or department and 3 said they did not.

The methods of communication considered most effective were memos first and meetings and face-to-face rated equally for second. The telephone was third and weekly bulletins and bulletin boards were not considered effective. When asked if they read all the memos they receive, 28 respondents said yes, 4 said no, and 1 said he "perused" them.

Twenty-six said they had seen some of the brochures printed by the District and 7 said they had not. Some of the brochures mentioned were on the public school week, the school board, and the school facts.

Asked to consider the bulletin board as a communication device, 15 indicated they look at their board daily, 6 occasionally, 5 weekly, 4 never, and 2 or 3 indicated once or twice a month. Thirteen indicated that the board was their source of information about jobs available in the District. Twenty-one said they knew when jobs were available and eleven said they did not.

The majority of the respondents indicated that their perceptions of the channel of communication from them followed the organizational lines upward.

When asked how they would find out different types of information the respondents indicated the following:

a) to find out the board action: 17 said they would read the minutes, 6 said they would ask someone who attended, 4 said they would attend, 11 said they would read the paper, and 2 said they would call Mrs. Gregg.

b) to find out if they should report to work when snow is on the ground: 28 said they would listen to the radio, 1 said he would watch the TV, and 1 said he would come anyway.

c) to exchange ideas: 11 said they would see the person and talk, 2 said they see them at workshops, 8 said they exchange ideas at area meetings, 11 use the phone, and 3 write notes.

d) to offer suggestions: 13 said they would go to their superior, 8 said they would offer them at a meeting, and 5 said they would write a memo.

When asked if the questions and needs were met most of the respondents indicated a great deal of difference in promptness of reply dealing with whether the question could be answered by their superior or whether it had to travel up the organizational levels. Twenty-one said that their needs were met in their office immediately, 5 said they were met in a relatively short period of time, 10 said the answers were delayed, and 3 not at all. Eleven indicated they were notified when an answer was to be delayed and 11 said they were not notified. Answers from people other than their superior take a longer time to be answered.

Thirty of the respondents said they felt that they had a source and could give feedback to communications when they received them, 2 said they felt they could not.

Twenty-seven read the Messenger, 18 of those like it because it is "newsy," and "informative." Five do not read the Messenger because it is propaganda, too dull, and needs to be jazzed up. Thirteen people said they do not read other newsletters. The remainder indicated that they read any that come (such as: the PTA Newsletter, the Bilingual Newsletter, the Weekly Bulletin, and the AAT Newsletter). Their favorite educational publications include the journals in their various fields of interest, the Texas Outlook and the Phi Delta Kappan.

When asked if they ever consult the Policy Book of the District, 24 said yes to answer questions on leave policy, building use, and other policies. Six people indicated they had not looked at the Policy Book. Suggestions for improvement of the book were to update it and make it more concise and less bulky. Suggestions for other helpful handbooks were:

- a handbook for substitute teachers.
- a handbook on procedures.
- an orientation handbook for new staff.
- a handbook for individual schools.
- a secretarial handbook.
- a departmental or divisional handbook.
- a resource directory.
- a student handbook.

Twenty-four respondents consider the mailing system of the District adequate and 9 do not. Those who did not consider it adequate cited problems such as mutilated mail and too much time in delivery. The other systems of communications (such as printing, reproduction, telephone, and memos) were all judged effective.

When asked to rate communications in the District, the respondents rated it all the way from excellent to very poor.

Two said it is excellent, 8 said good, 7 said relatively good, 10 said fair, 2 said bad, 3 said poor, and 1 said very poor.

The respondents were also asked to offer suggestions for improvement of the communications. Although the initial answers to the majority of the items seemed to be positive across the sections or split between positive and negative, the suggestions made by these people seem to indicate some major problem areas. The major suggestions were:

1) to decentralize some of the administrative staff especially in the area of instruction.

2) to have more staff development workshops and in-service for all, from staff administrators to secretaries.

3) to have weekly departmental meetings.

4) have a special orientation for new people.

5) train people to write better and more concise memos.

6) use the bulletin board to communicate with your staff.

7) plan meetings better, especially large ones, have agendas and set time limits.

8) coordinate information to teachers and send it before something happens.

9) have task or office meetings to work out details of jobs.

10) need much more communication between school and central office and between divisions and within divisions.

11) keep people informed about what affects them, especially teachers and staff members.

12) don't squash the initiative of people in the office.

13) have one person in each office to be responsible for communicating to others.

14) hire one person to take care of all the routing communication in the District.

15) use the vice principal to reduce the communication load on the principal.

16) make sure the mailing list is complete for each department.

17) have administrators and school board members visit the schools several times a year.

18) Answer all memos sent to administrators. It is embarrassing when principals can't answer teachers' questions because they haven't gotten an answer from their superior.

These suggestions indicate some major problem areas that should be further investigated.

Person_____
Position_____

OPEN-ENDED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The office of Research and Evaluation is this year investigating the effectiveness of the AISD internal communication system. Can you therefore provide us with your reactions to the following questions.

1. Have you ever worked in another school system? ____Yes ____No

2. If yes, how long ago? _____yrs. ago What was its size? _____students

3. How long have you been in this system? _____years

4. Do you think the primary goals of the programs instituted by AISD are communicated to you?

5. Do you receive enough formal information on the programs in which you are involved? By what method do you receive it?

6. Do you regularly attend the:
   a._____General Principals Meeting
   b._____Faculty Meeting
   c._____IIC Meeting
   d._____Department-Staff Meeting
   e._____Other (Name_____)
   f._____Other (Name_____)
   g._____Other (Name_____)
   h._____Other (Name_____)

7. Do you receive notification of meetings concerning you in time to reply or plan your schedule? _____ What is the minimum time you really need on the average?_____

8. In each of these meetings, is the information which you receive applicable to:
   a. Your Job
   b. Your Understanding of the Machinery of the System
   c. The Policy-making

   If not, why not?

9. Do you feel that you have sufficient input of information into what goes on in AISD? In your school/department?

10. What are the methods used to communicate with you at the present time? Which is the most effective? Which is the least effective?

11. Do you read all the memos you receive? If not, why not?

12. Have you seen any brochures published by AISD? Which ones?

13. How often do you look at your school/department bulletin board?

14. Do you know when there are new jobs open in AISD? How?

15. What do you perceive the channels of communication to be in AISD from your particular point of view?

16. What channels of communication do you use for:
    a. What action the board took at its last meeting.
    b. You wake up, everything's frozen solid and you want to find out if you have to report to work.
    c. How do you exchange ideas with your counterpart at another school or in another department?
    d. How do you offer suggestions?

17. Are your questions and needs met:
    a. Immediately.
    b. In a relatively short period of time.
    c. Delayed.
    d. Not at all. If not, how could it be corrected?

18. When the answer is delayed, are you notified in any way?

19. When you receive a communication is there a source for you to respond to?

20. Do you read the Messenger? Do you like it? Why?

    Do you read any other AISD newsletters? Which ones? Do you like it/them? Why?

What is your favorite educational publication? Why?

21. Do you ever consult the AISD policy handbook? For what reasons? Do you like it? Why?

22. Do you ever wish there were other kinds of handbooks? What types?

23. Is the mailing system in AISD adequate?

24. Which are the most effective:
    a. Large Meetings
    b. Small Meetings
    c. Memos
    d. Newsletters
    e. Grapevine

25. What do you think should be done to improve communications?

26. Do you find the following systems effective in disseminating and acquiring information? If not, what are the problems you have encountered?
    a. Reproduction
    b. Telephone
    c. Printing
    d. Memos

27. What rating would you give internal communications in AISD?

_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____

Excellent Fair Very Poor

REVIEW OF THE NETWORK ANALYSIS

In recent years analysis of communication networks of organizations has become more numerous. These are done to give an idea of the actual flow of communication in organizational systems. Researchers have found that some information follows organizational lines and some does not. This has often related to major problem areas of the organization. It has also indicated places where changes could be made to eliminate some problems.

Lee Thayer states that if "communications follow the organizational lines then it will be only as good and efficient as the organization of the system."[1]

Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn suggest that "the efficiency of a group increases as the number of links in the communication chain decreases. This is probably because leaders think they reach more staff members than they do."[2]

Network analyses show who communicates with whom and their frequency of the communication. It also indicates what members of the system are isolates and are not communicated with; and who are liaison or key communicators in each group. The key communicators are very important because once they are identified, they can be trained to improve their communication and thereby improve the communication of the system.

A Communication Network Survey consisting of 5 pages and 348 names of administrators and secretaries was adapted from Peter R. Monge's report and administered to those named on the list. Additional information about the instrument can be found on the attached instrument description. This data was to provide information about who communicates with whom and how often.

In the preliminary stages, the analysis of the data indicates:

1. departments exhibit a high degree of small group cohesiveness.
2. communication up and down the organizational lines is stronger than across divisional and departmental lines of communication.

---

[1] Lee O. Thayer, Administrative Communication, (Irwin, Inc., Homewood, 1961).

[2] Daniel Katz and Robert L. Kahn, The Social Psychology of Organizations, (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1966).

3. none of the departments appear to be totally isolated from the rest of the district.
4. indications are that there is little communication among schools or among schools and the central office. This may be that schools do not consider written communication as true communication and hence perceive little communication flow to themselves.
5. there are some internal departmental discrepancies between expected and occurring communication patterns.
6. there are some interdepartmental discrepancies between expected and occurring communication patterns.
7. school secretaries tend to be isolated from other communicators. This is interesting because they are prime communicators with the public, but get the least amount of communication from any office or person in the district.

The departmental data from this study will be covered with individual department heads. The interdepartmental and school-administrative data serves as needs assessment data for the action recommendations of this study. The individual printouts of networks should be utilized by a task force to work on communication flow.

COMMUNICATION NETWORK ANALYSIS
INSTRUMENT DESCRIPTION

To whom was the instrument administered?

348 administrators and their secretaries in all schools and organizational divisions of the District.

How many administrations were given?

One: In part to Principals at the General Principals Meeting and the remainder through the school mail.

When was the instrument administered?

Approximately 1/2 - April 8, 1975 - meeting.
Approximately 1/2 - May 12, 1975 - mailed.

Where was the instrument administered?

Approximately 1/2 at the General Principals meeting.
Approximately 1/2 through the school mail.

Who administered the instrument?

Staff of the Office of Research and Evaluation and self-administered by administrators.

What training did the administrators have?

Was the instrument administered under standardized conditions?

No

Were there problems with the instrument or the administration that might affect the validity of the data?

There were problems with the typing of the instrument, some lines were uneven. Two lines were omitted on the first version of the instrument.

Brief description of the instrument:

Contains 348 names of administrators and their secretaries with space for the respondent to indicate how frequently he talks with each person about his job and social topics.

Who developed the instrument?

Taken from The Study of Communication Networks and Communication in Large Organizations, but adapted with AISD names.

What reliability and validity data are available on the instrument?

None

Are there norm data available for interpreting the results?

None

LITERATURE REVIEW

William V. Haney suggests communications can be improved if communicators are able:

1. to recognize some of the patterns of miscommunication which occur in serial transmissions.
2. to understand some of the factors contributing to these patterns
3. to take measures and practice techniques for preventing the recurrence of these patterns.[1]

On the following pages are guidelines to facilitate your communication, whether you are a supervisor or an administrator. Careful study and implementation of these techniques will enable you to be a more efficient, effective, and valuable member of the School District.

On this next social program, shall we say we support the concept and reduce our role or announce a sweeping reorganization and kill the damn thing?

---

[1]William V. Haney, "Serial Communication of Information in Organizations," Communication Probes, (Science Research Associates, Inc., Chicago, 1974), p. 125.

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES FOR THOSE WHO COORDINATE

UNITS OF THE ORGANIZATION

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES FOR THOSE WHO COORDINATE UNITS (DEPARTMENTS, SCHOOLS, PROGRAMS, DIVISIONS, FUNCTIONS) OF THE ORGANIZATION

What do you communicate about?

The administrator and his communication is evaluated by his fellow administrators and his staff.

You should communicate about the:

A. History of the District
B. Goals of the District
C. Policies of the District
D. Procedures of the Department or School
E. Schedules of the Department or School
F. Innovations of the District, Department, or School
G. Performance of Employees
H. Programs of the District
I. What Will Affect the Employees and Their Jobs.

How to communicate effectively

Is it easy to understand the purpose of your communication? If not, you should:

Decide if there is really a need to communicate. Don't let your prejudice influence you; you may be the only one who really needs the detailed information you have received. If you are, don't clutter up other communication channels with unnecessary messages.

Decide what is the specific objective of your message. Is it to inform, persuade, evaluate, or instruct?

Do you have all the salient facts about a situation before you communicate about it? If not, you should:

Discover the present and previous conditions of the situation.

Discover what work has already been done in the relation to the job or situation.

Decide who will be affected by this communication.

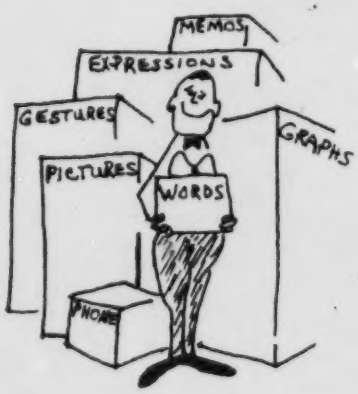
A. Will the message travel up the levels of the organization, down, or across?

B. Will the message travel one direction and the effects be felt in another?

C. What type of mental attitude will the receivers probably have when they get your message?

Do you always decide what method of communication is best for each situation? If not, you should:

Decide which of the following methods will help the message reach the receiver the fastest and most accurate. Really think about your message and its medium.



Type of Communication	Method of Communication	When to Use this Communication	How to Improve this Communication
Oral	Meetings Large	1. Informing heads of all departments and divisions of new policies or procedural changes. 2. Coordinating the goal-setting for the District.	A. Have a complete agenda. Know the purpose of your meeting and arrange your agenda to accomplish it. B. Allow enough time for discussion of agenda items, but also set a time limit to avoid repeating ideas and also to finish at the appointed time. C. Don't spend time in your meeting on things people already know or things that pertain to events already past. D. Be sure that the notices for the meetings are sent to participants in time for them to arrange their schedules.
	Small	1. Making decisions about new and old programs. 2. Coordinating departmental tasks. 3. Discussing the work and plans of a committee or task force. 4. Ironing out problem areas for conflict. 5. Developing new policies or procedures.	
Visual	Memoranda	1. Notifying participants of upcoming events or meetings. 2. Explaining tasks for employees responsible for the same job either in the same department or across departmental lines. 3. Informing employees in a department or an office of new policies or procedural changes.	A. Make sure that memos are sent in time for feedback or action to be received. B. Make your memos clear and concise by using simple wording. C. Set aside a time daily to answer all memos requiring action or feedback no later than the day after you receive it. D. Make a real effort to keep all memos to one page.

Type of Communication	Method of Communication	When to Use this Communication	How to Improve this Communication
		4. Informing superiors of an employee's performance 5. Reporting a grievance to a superior. 6. Communicating about functions across departments (i.e. payroll, budget, working hours, and training). 7. Informing <u>your</u> staff of innovations in their field. 8. Offering suggestions to your superior or peer in another department. 9. Writing summaries of investigations. 10. Providing feedback for a memo you may have received.	E. Cover only <u>one</u> subject per memo, do not stuff it full of all the things you've been saving for a week.
Oral	Telephone	1. Asking about a procedure in another office. 2. Checking on a rumor about a policy. 3. Asking about a function of another office. 4. Reminding people of deadlines and meetings. 5. Trying to coordinate the activities of two offices. 6. Seeking opinions about decisions or possible decisions.	A. Make the call short and to the point. B. Make a list of the questions to be sure you get all the information you need with one call. C. Return all the calls you receive. Don't shuffle them selectively into the wastebasket. Such action has an unfavorable affect on your credibility.

Type of Communication	Method of Communication	When to Use this Communication	How to Improve this Communication
			D. Do not request your secretary to answer calls for you. If the person called you, they want to speak to you. Your secretary may not have the information to answer all the inquiries of the caller.
Visual	Handbooks or Manuals	1. Describing the tasks covered by staff positions. 2. Describing the policies of the District. 3. Describing the procedures of your office. 4. Providing a training reference for each staff position. 5. Providing a chart of the divisions and departments of the District.	A. Make one manual for one subject. Do not put the policies of the District and the training of an addition to your office staff in the same manual. B. Make it as clear and simple as possible so that the interpretation by different people will be the same. C. Keep the manuals updated and accessible.
Visual	Bulletin Board	1. Posting notices of interest about the District for all employees to read. 2. Posting notices about workshops for employees. 3. Post organizational charts for the District and your Department.	A. Create an attractive bulletin board by keeping it neat and uncluttered. B. Have a section for the new items to be posted that employees look at daily. C. Be sure to take things off the Bulletin Board when their effectiveness is past. D. Do not let things be posted on top of other items.

Type of Communication	Method of Communication	When to Use this Communication	How to Improve this Communicatio
Oral	Personal Conference	1. Explaining a particular task. 2. Listening to a problem or complaint about your office. 3. Evaluating an employee's work. 4. Asking for ideas on new and old procedures or programs. 5. Disciplining an employee.	A. Stay calm and objective. B. Try to be as clear and precise as possible. C. Answer any questions the person might have. D. Listen to your employee carefully. E. Explain the reasons for any action you take--good or bad.
Visual	Newsletter	1. Giving general information to your staff and others when it will not affect their job, but will create a sense of harmony if they are told.	A. Make them newsy, interesting. B. Cover things people will not usually know about policies or programs of the District.
Oral	Grapevine	1. Testing employee reaction to a particular new policy or program. 2. When you want to move a certain piece of general information fast with a fairly high degree of accuracy.	A. Make the grapevine work for you by formally telling your staff what they need to know about policies, decisions, and procedures. Then there is nothing for the grapevine to talk about. B. Improve by having a properly administered communication program.

When you communicate do you take time to carefully construct the message? If not, you should:

Make sure the message is clear and simple.

Make sure the message follows a logical sequence--give the details in the order they were given to you.

Make sure you include any background information that is necessary to understand the message. Don't eliminate facts you know but your receiver may not know.

Construct your messages as close to the way your receiver will interpret it as possible.

A. Watch not only the meaning of the words you use, but the overtones of those words.

B. Make sure the words are not only accurate but <u>adequate</u> to convey the meaning you intend.

Be sure you understand your receiver. The manner in which you encode a message can make the difference between acceptance or rejection of the message. To insure acceptance, you should ask yourself these questions:

A. How will he take this message?

B. Is he sensitive?

C. Will his age, religion, value systems, training, prejudices, or ultimate goals make any difference in the way he interprets the message?

D. Is he slow to change his opinions or work habits?

E. What experience does he have in relation to the message?

F. Will the message affect him directly or indirectly, positively or negatively?

When you actually send (transmit) the message, do you:

Pick a time when the message will be well received.

A. Not at the end of the workday.

B. Not during a peak in the amount of work being done.

C. Not when an employee is mad or upset.

Do you consider the physical setting of the transmission? It should be:

Pleasant and free from antagonizing forces.

An uninterrupted transmission.

Are your transmissions consistent? Be sure that follow-up messages are in line with the initial message in tone and meaning.

Before you disseminate the message to everyone, do you try it out on someone involved? This will provide a sample of the feedback you are likely to receive.

Does your nonverbal activity (actions, gestures, facial expressions) support your message? Many times what we say and the way we look are in direct contradiction.

Do you use dual media as often as you can?

If you send a memo, follow-up with a phone call.

If it's an oral presentation at a meeting, have a printed outline of the major points to give to your listeners or use the blackboard.

Use the object itself to demonstrate if you are introducing new equipment.

If you make a phone call about an important procedure or decision, follow-up with a memo.

Do you highlight the important ideas of your messages?

When you communicate, do you:

Follow-up your messages a few days later?

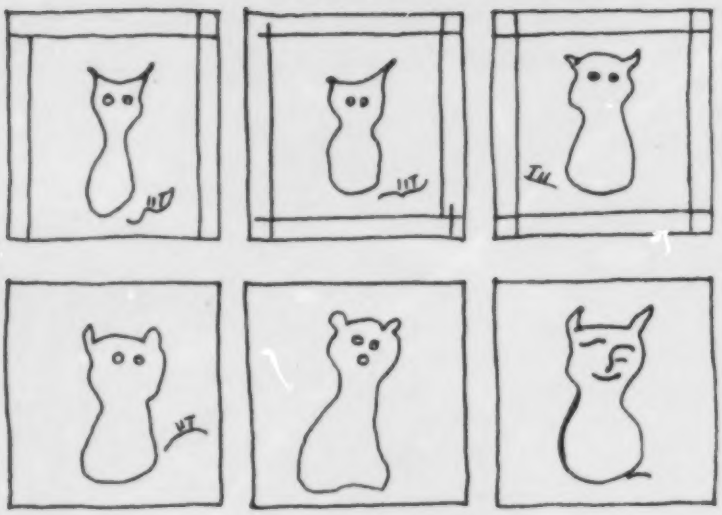
Try to find out the reactions of the receiver. Ask questions to be sure both you and the receiver understand.

Listen carefully so that you can offer feedback.

"Clue me in--was the last motion to construct a new building or to destruct an old one?"

A. Take notes on what is being said.
B. Be wary of by-passing and inference.
C. Be wary of putting your own opinion or interpretation on a message rather than the sender's.
D. Review what has been said.

DISTORTION



OMISSION

When you communicate, do you unknowingly create barriers to that communication? If so, you probably:

Distort the message sent from another department by inferring some conclusions that are not there or by changing one word to a simpler word which may, in fact, change the meaning.

Add words or phrases to complete ideas that you do not completely understand.

Omit words or phrases that seem to have no significance. You can correct this by:

A. Taking notes and giving all the details in the correct order.

B. Be aware that you make these mistakes and make a real effort to correct them.

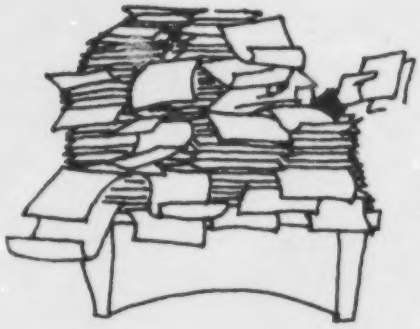
C. Decide what you <u>know</u> and what you are <u>inferring</u> from what you saw or heard.

D. Slow down oral transmissions.

E. Reduce the number of links in the chain-of-communication.

Do you get too much communication--an overload?

Try to reduce your communication load by deciding what communication you need for your job and eliminate the other.



Try to set limits on written communication by keeping memos to 1 page and 1 subject.

Delegate total responsibilities and their related communications to others so that your communication can be limited.

LITERATURE SUPPORT

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES FOR THOSE WHO COORDINATE UNITS OF THE ORGANIZATION

An administrator creates the efficiency of an organization with his communication. "The top executive," says David Moberly, "is a communicator, he speaks, writes, reads, and listens 75% of the time and of that time, 75% is face-to-face communication."[1] Anyone whose job involves communicating the majority of his time should know what to communicate. Leland Brown states that a system should keep its employees informed about:

1. the organization and its operations
2. the policies and practices affecting the people and their jobs
3. history of the organization and its future.[2]

Considering communication as a function or tool of management, Brown identifies 5 of these functions.

1. It serves as an instrument of control within and without the company.
2. It provides information needed for coordinating activities of management.
3. It provides data as a basis for intelligent managerial decisions.
4. It makes possible delegation of authority and responsibility through a system of records and reports.
5. It functions as the essential basis of cooperation.[3]

Communication as a function of management creates responsibilities for the administrator. The American Management Association suggests many of the responsibilities that administrators have to their staff and to other's staffs are related to communication. Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn state that the loyalty of employees to an organization is affected by the information given to different groups in the organization about its goals, policies, activities, and accomplishments.[4] Administrators should tell employees about the new

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[1] Dr. David Moberly, "Developing Formal Structures of Communication in Educational Organizations," The Administrator, Vol. 2, #3, Spring 1972, p. 7.

[2] Leland Brown, Communicating Facts and Ideas in Business (Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1961), p. 6.

[3] Ibid., p. 29.

[4] David Katz and Robert L. Kahn, The Social Psychology of Organizations, (John Wiley & Sons Inc., New York. 1966), p. 223.

developments in the organization, especially the ones that will affect them. The explanation should include "why there was a change, exactly what the change is, and to what extent it will affect him."[5]

Once the administrator has decided what he should and should not communicate about, he must decide why he is communicating. Gerald Goldhaber asks these questions of the administrator: "Why is the message sent and what specific function does it serve?"[6] The American Management Association suggests these questions:

- What is the objective?
- Is it (the communication) really necessary or am I letting my prejudice influence me?
- Who will be affected by this?
- Am I really conveying something of value?[7]

Lee Thayer indicates answers to these questions lie in the knowledge the administrator has from his limited capacity for information. The questions help him select his inputs and the environment in which to make decisions.[8] An administrator's limited capacity for information is an excellent reason to open the communication channels to their full effectiveness. He can then draw on the information others have about the subject.

The functions of communication are to inform, evaluate, instruct, and influence another's feelings or behavior. Three questions of concern for administrative communicators are:

Effectiveness	- How effective was it? Was the purpose accomplished?
Efficiency	- How efficiently was it produced, transmitted, and perceived?
Clearness	- How clearly did it convey its meaning?[9]

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[5] The NFI Standard Manual for Supervisors, "Key to Effective Communications," (Bureau of Business Practice, Inc., 1969), pp. 106-7.

[6] Gerald M. Goldhaber, Organizational Communication, (Wm. C. Brown Co. Publishers, Dubuque, Iowa, 1974), p. 10.

[7] American Management Association, The Supervisory Handbook (1968).

[8] Lee O. Thayer, Administrative Communication, (Irwin, Inc., Homewood, Illinois, 1961).

[9] Thayer, p. 8.

Communication can be useful in determining problem areas, courses of action, coordination of activities, and measuring performance. The communication problems are:

- determining what information to gather
- locating the information
- preparing it for use
- transmitting and disseminating it
- receiving information
- evaluating information
- utilizing information
- determining when to communicate to whom.[10]

After the purpose is clear, salient facts about the problem or procedure must be gathered before the administrator can communicate effectively. Goldhaber suggests that a communicator should know:

1. Who is involved and how often do they participate in the activity?

2. Who started the activity?

3. What type and how much advance work has already been done on this?

4. How will the information travel up, down, or across organizational lines?[11]

One other very important thing to consider is how it will affect everyone else. The administrator may do this by putting himself in the employee's position by asking how he will react and feel.[12]

When the administrator has all the facts surrounding the communication, he will need to decide what method of communication is best. "The very nature of a social system implies a selectivity of channels and communication acts, it is a mandate to avoid some and to utilize others."[13]

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[10] Ibid., p. 8.

[11] Goldhaber, p. 60.

[12] NFI Manual, p. 86.

[13] Katz and Kahn, p. 225.

The classifications of communication are oral and visual. Included in these are 3 types of organizational messages which Redding calls:

- task messages - activities of concern
- maintenance messages - commands, procedure, orders, control
- human messages - people's attitudes, feelings, satisfaction.[14]

All these types can be transmitted by memo, phone, letters, or meetings. The important aspect is what is appropriate for the information which needs to be transmitted. The most efficient and least time-consuming method is the best. This should be a method which allows the message to be simply and clearly stated and consistent.

Charles Redfield suggests adapting the message to the receiver.[15] Knowing how the receiver will take a particular message, will enable you to decide how much and what type of responsibility to give the employee (receiver). Questions to help adapt a message could consider the employee's age, ability to change, prejudice, and value system.[16] Successfully adapted messages will "demonstrate the administrator's sensitivity and analytical skills." He will see the situation as the employee sees it.[17]

The message itself must be encoded (worded) so that there is very little or no room for misinterpretation. This is where knowing your receiver helps because you can project which words, phrases, and tones of meaning will help him understand exactly what you mean. The words must be both accurate and adequate, facts must be in a logical sequence with no absence of details or facts known to you, but not to your receiver.[18]

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[14] Goldhaber, p. 62.

[15] Charles E. Redfield, Communication in Management, (Chicago Press, Chicago, 1958), p. 29.

[16] American Management Association, p. 71.

[17] James C. McCroskey, Carl E. Larson, Mark L. Knapp, An Introduction to Interpersonal Communication, (Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1971), p. 221.

[18] NFI Manual, p. 85.

When the message is encoded, you must transmit (send) it to all those who need it. In order to do this effectively, the administrator, Goldhaber says, should pick a time when the message will be as well received as possible. He should consider the interaction conditions in the channel--the noise level, room arrangement, the location. By trying the message out on someone involved first, the administrator can avoid some of the detrimental overtones or words that could cause non-acceptance. During the transmission and feedback, the sender should be sure that his nonverbal actions do not contradict, but are consistent with his verbal actions.[19] A facial expression or gesture could destroy everything said. Birdwhistle and Harrison indicate that "65% of the social meaning in face-to-face conversation is carried by nonverbal messages."[20] One of the best insurance policies for understanding messages and their transmission is the use of dual media whenever possible and the highlighting of important pertinent ideas with both media.[21]

The responsibility for communicating a message does not end when the message has been transmitted. Feedback (reaction), a very important part of communicating, should be actively sought by the administrator. Follow-up messages, ask open-ended questions of the receiver. Not just "did you understand," but "what is the procedure for this change?" If the receiver has problems, listen carefully to his questions. Haney suggests that the sender take notes on the problems, then reword the message, and send it again. The sender must always be aware of inferring something the receiver did not mean by his question. Answer what was asked, not what you want him to ask. When soliciting responses, be sure your nonverbal communication doesn't discourage the employee from asking. Always be sure to summarize what he has said to him so that you know you understand.[22]

From time to time when we communicate, we encounter barriers to the communication. Haney cites some reasons for the creation of these barriers:

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[19] Goldhaber, p. 62.

[20] Ibid., p. 133.

[21] William V. Haney, "Serial Communication of Information in Organizations," Communication Probes, (Science Research Associates, 1974), p. 132.

[22] Ibid., p. 128.

1. The receiver's desire to simplify the message.

2. The receiver's desire to convey a sensible message.

3. The receiver's desire to convey a pleasant message.

The barriers usually take the form of:

1. Distortion of the message. Altering what is already there to make more sense.

2. Omission of details in the message the receiver feels are not necessary because he already knows them.

3. Addition of details because the receiver did not get enough information to understand the message.

Haney and others have suggested some simple, but very useful ways to alleviate these barriers.

1. Take notes - don't rely on your memory.

2. Give the next receiver the details in the order they were given to you.

3. Do not bypass (omit) things you know or do not understand.

4. Don't infer things you have not actually been told.

5. Slow down oral transmissions so the receiver can get every detail down.

6. Simplify the message but don't distort, add, or omit.

7. Reduce the number of links in the chains.

8. Review what you have received with the sender if possible - if not go over it yourself.[23]

Another problem encountered frequently is communication overload--the receipt of too much information. Usually the communication contains detailed information not absolutely pertinent to the receiver's job. A summary would be more efficient in these cases with a notation of the place to get the details. Katz and Kahn provide another way to

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[23] Ibid., p. 127.

reduce overload. Reduced input, such as reducing interoffice memos to a single page, would cut down a majority of the overload to administrators. This would give some extra time the administrator could classify as time to answer phone calls and memos. "The accessibility of all members of an organization at any time is a handicap because executives need some uninterrupted blocks of time to make decisions, sign papers, etc."[24] The rest of the time your employees need to know they can see you about anything.

Finally, none of these efforts will be effective, if the administrator does have the trust and respect of his employees. You can cultivate this by being honest with your staff. Harold Van Winkle says that one of the best ways to build trust and respect is to create a supportive climate in your department by building your employees' morale. Factors which affect morale are the following:

1. Interest shown by the administrator in the employees' work and problems.

2. Willingness to listen to employees' suggestions and problems providing adequate upward formal and informal communication.

3. Create a good social environment. Make your office a good place to work and let the staff form friendships.

4. Make sure the employee knows he is accepted as a valuable member, his work is important, recognition for achievements, member of friendly competent faculty, a superintendent or principal who is approachable and understanding.[25]

Putting yourself in your staff's shoes and being impartial in your dealings with them will create the trust and respect from your staff that will enable all the other communication techniques to be effective and enable the administration to create an efficient organization.

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[24] Katz and Kahn, p. 234.

[25] Harold Van Winkle, "Communication Needs of the Formal Organization," The Administrator, Vol. 2, #3, Spring 1972, p. 6.

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES FOR YOU AS A SUPERVISOR

OF THE WORK OF OTHERS

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES FOR YOU AS A SUPERVISOR OF THE WORK OF OTHERS

When you communicate, do you try to promote trust and honesty with your staff? If so, you probably:

Try to understand other's feelings by putting yourself in their place.

Encourage your employees to discuss problems and ideas by creating an "open door" policy.

Be impartial and fair in your dealings with your staff.

Compliment your employees when they do their jobs well.

Make your staff feel you care about them as "people" not just a worker.

Allocate time for communication with your staff members individually on a regular basis.

Try not to restrict communication to crisis times; take time in quiet periods to talk over philosophy and general goals of the district, school or department.

Let your staff know honestly about the pressures you work under.

Stay aware of concealed frictions between staff members and take time to see that they are openly dealt with.

Are your employees working harmoniously - contributing to the efficiency of your office - or is there dissatisfaction in your group? If not, you should:

Promote cooperation among <u>your</u> staff.

Promote loyalty among <u>your</u> staff.

Do you give the same courtesy and fair treatment to all of your employees alike? If so, you probably:

Are honest with your employees - let them know where they stand.

Explain district policies and changes to your staff.

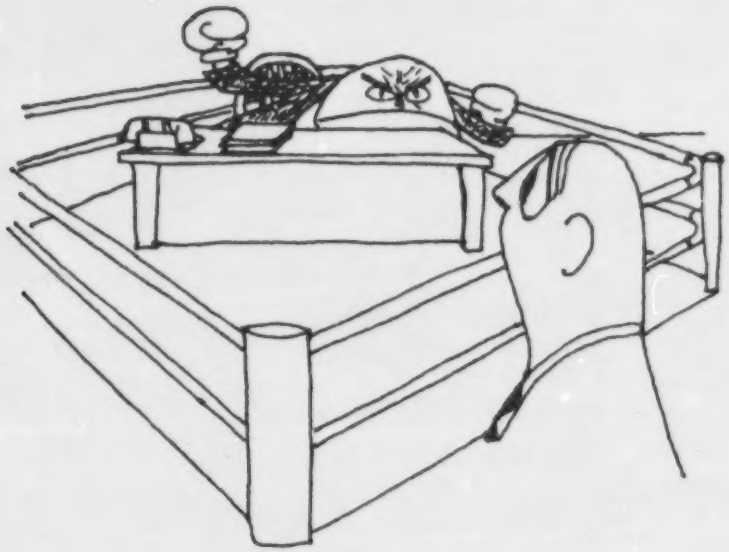
Listen carefully to every complaint by:

A. Encouraging the employee to talk to you honestly.
B. Staying calm.
C. Not taking hasty action--getting all the facts first.
D. Not giving advice on personal problems.

Are you being pleasant, understanding, and helpful with your people? Are you constantly studying them individually and trying to bring out their best qualities for the benefit of themselves? If so, you probably:

Circulate among your staff to promote mutual trust and respect.

Know the needs, the skills, and the probably reactions of your staff.



Do you cooperate with other supervisors or are you easily irritated or overly competitive with them.

> Be aware of the effect <u>your</u> attitude has on your staff, coworkers, and supervisors.

Do you invite "ideas" from your employees and when employees come to you with their suggestions about work, are you tactful, thoughtful, and considerate, or do you just "throw water" on them with lack of interest? If so, you should:

> Promote discussion of departmental tasks among your staff.
>
> Ask them open-ended questions to direct and encourage their ideas.
>
> Compliment members of your staff on well-done jobs.

Do you plan your work as far ahead as possible, and do you coordinate the efforts of your employees to eliminate confusion and get more production? Are your instructions clear and concise, or is it the other way? Do you let each employee operate on his own vague instructions that you are not quite sure of yourself? If so,

> Don't suffer from the "I Can Do It Better Myself" fallacy. Delegate tasks to your employees, but make sure they realize that the major decisions will be made by you.

Communicate to the employee exactly what you want, the time available to complete the task, and then let him work independently.

Use additional means of communicating new tasks to your staff--oral, written, visual, or combinations of these.

* The above questions are from Ham Adams, "A Simple Guide for a Supervisor," American Management Assoc., 1970. The suggestions are not.

LITERATURE SUPPORT

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES FOR YOU AS A SUPERVISOR OF THE WORK OF OTHERS

Leland Brown's statement that "A supervisor becomes a key communicator for different levels of management"[1] is supported by Myra Jane Barry's study to determine the most valuable communication media in 35 organizations and the most valuable media to employees of those organizations. Thirty-three percent of the 35 organizations said that supervisors were the second most valuable means of giving information to employees and 56% said supervisors were most valuable in getting information from employees. When the employees were asked, 38% said personal contact with their supervisor was their third best source of information with only two employee publications rating more helpful.[2]

Realizing the importance of the supervisor, researchers (such as Mann and Dent, Funk, Simons, Likert, and Meyer) have spent hours trying to characterize good managers, foremen, and supervisors. Although it is a business study, Meyer's research is valuable to organizations because it deals with attitudes of effective supervisory people. Meyer's research done in 1949 suggests the best measure is a foreman's attitudes toward his employees. Subsequent researchers have suggested that certain communication attitudes are characteristic of effective supervisors in a variety of organizational settings.[3] The following characteristics were found to be common to effective supervisors:

1. He's a man with whom employees feel free to discuss important things about their jobs.
2. He lets his employees know where they stand.
3. He is one with whom employees feel free to discuss personal problems.
4. He is not "bossy," "quick to criticize," "a driver," or "unreasonably strict."
5. He lets employees work pretty much on their own instead of supervising them too closely.
6. He is a "leader of men," "likable," "reasonable."[4]

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[1] Leland Brown, Communicating Facts and Ideas in Business, (Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 1961), p. 14.

[2] Robert D. Breth, Dynamic Management Communications, (Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., Reading, Massachusetts, 1969), p.14.

[3] James C. McCroskey, Carl E. Larson, Mark L. Knapp, An Introduction to Interpersonal Communication, (Prentice-Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1971), p. 206-208.

[4] Ibid., p. 206.

Communication is directly linked to supervision and employee dissatisfaction. Ben Grey says, "A smart manager can make lemonade from the lemon of dissatisfaction."[5] Grey's recipe for the supervisor is: to be honest with your employees, keep fault-finding to a minimum, and to compliment your workers personally on jobs well-done by recommending their work to others. By backing your staff and their decisions you will promote trust and understanding.

Dr. Gordon Lippitt, Program Director for National Training Laboratories has developed six suggestions, based on communication, for becoming a better leader.

1. Be aware of your own impact on a group.
2. Have insight into the needs, abilities, and reactions of others.
3. Believe sincerely in the group approach to problem solving.
4. Understand what makes a group tick.
5. Be able to diagnose the ailments of a sick group.
6. Be flexible enough to be a leader or a member.[6]

Another method of promoting harmony, trust, and understanding among your staff is delegating jobs that give employees a chance to grow. This frees you to do jobs that only you as supervisor can do, and has the long range benefit of building a more capable staff. Do not delegate tasks, however, without communicating to that employee what exactly he is to do and the time limit he has for completion. Be sure that you select the person who will do the job carefully and expertly and then give him the freedom to work independently with his own methods. Make sure he understands how far his authority goes with the task and that you have the responsibility for the final decisions. Also, be sure the people affected by this decision are informed of the decision and of the contingent circumstances. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, let your employees know how their work contributes to the quality of the overall product.[7]

Circulating among your staff opens both formal and informal communication channels. Visit informally with employees about their interests and aspirations, about what they want from their job, and about their importance to the organization. Let them know you care about them as well as their job.

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[5]Ben E. Grey, "How to Cope With Employee Dissatisfaction," Reproductions Review and Methods, January, 1975.

[6]Brent D. Peterson, Gerald M. Goldhaber, R. Wayne Pace, Communication Probes, (Science Research Associates, Inc., Chicago, 1974), p. 162.

[7]The NFI Standard Manual for Supervisors, "Key to Effective Communication," (Bureau of Business Practice, Inc., 1969), pp. 94-96.

Finally, one of the supervisor's most valuable communication tools is listening. This is especially true when a problem or complaint arises. The smart supervisor listens very closely to gather the facts and to make sure that a complaint is not masking a deeper, more serious problem. By verbalizing a complaint, the employee, many times, is able to put the problem into perspective and decide on the action himself. In this way the supervisor serves as a reflective communicator (listener only). Stay calm and be objective, and your job of mediator will be easier.[8]

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[8]Dynamic Supervision, "How to Treat Complaints," Bureau of Business Practice, 1975.

GUIDELINES FOR YOU AS A SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEE

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES FOR YOU AS A SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEE

Know Your School District

Do you really know about your school district? If so, you are probably familiar with the:

History of the District
Goals of the District
Policies of the District
Procedures of the Department
Schedules of the Department
Innovations of the District and Department
Performance of Employees
Programs of the District
Plans for innovations

Know Your Communication Channels

Can you use the communication channels effectively? If so, you probably:

Are willing to discuss problems or complaints with your supervisor.

Get and send notices of meetings and reports in time for them to be helpful.

Answer all the memos you receive as soon as possible, being sure that you always answer within a day after it is received.

Make sure that any memos you send are clear and concise and no longer than 1 page.

Use words that your receiver will understand.

Attend all the meetings you should, and arrive on time so that you do not throw off the time schedules of others.

Do not return calls from someone else when you do not have all the information needed to answer his inquiry.

Do not leave people holding on the phone for long periods of time.

Keep the bulletin board up-to-date and attractive.

Know the Receiver of Your Communication

Do you consider the receiver of your message? If so, you probably:

Try to put yourself in his place and understand his feelings, opinions, and training.

Arrange memos in a logical detailed sequence.

Know how your communication will affect the receiver and his work.

Are you careful when you send (transmit) your message? If so, you probably:

Consider the appropriate time for the message.

Are sure they are consistent with your other messages.

Coordinate your nonverbal activity (actions, gestures, facial expressions) to the words and your tone.

Use dual media as often as possible (i.e., phone and memo, meeting and outline of points, etc.).

If you communicate effectively, you probably:

Listen carefully and take notes.

Are conscious of not inferring, distorting, or adding to the message you've received.

Slow down what you transmit orally.

Highlight the important points by some means.

Try not to overload others with your communications.

Do not spread rumors through the grapevine, but ask for the truth from a knowledgeable source.

APPENDIX

Inst. 207

AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

ASSIGNMENT SHEET

TO: DATE:

FROM:

ASSIGNMENT

DEADLINE: _____

DONE: _____

COMMENTS

COMMUNICATIONS CHECKLIST

True	False	
		I plan my communication carefully.
		I decide on the objective for my message.
		I try to put myself in the employee's place when I talk with him.
		I test my communication on a third party.
		I am always consistent when I communicate.
		I always try to be a good listener.
		I give and solicit feedback on communications I send and receive.

COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVENESS CHECKLIST

COMMUNICATION RECEIVER	HOW FREQUENTLY DO YOU COMMUNICATE	DO YOUR COMMUNICATIONS GET RESULTS	IF NOT, WHY NOT	WHAT ACTION CAN I TAKE TO IMPROVE
Directors				
Instructional Coordinators				
Special Program Coordinators				
Teachers				
Parents				
Students				
Secretarial Staff				
Assistants				
Custodians				
Aides				
Volunteers				
News Media				

COMMUNICATION ASSESSMENT FORM

Please answer the questions below according to the following scale:
(Please circle the best answer)

1. 0 - 20%
2. 21 - 40%
3. 41 - 60%
4. 61 - 80%
5. 81 -100%

1. Suppose you are meeting with your faculty and someone does not understand something you have just said. Perhaps he will tell you about his lack of understanding and perhaps he won't. About what percent of the faculty are willing to tell you when they do not understand something you said? 1 2 3 4 5

2. Among the other faculty members, what percent do you think will tell you when they like something you have done or said? 1 2 3 4 5

3. About what percent will tell you when they disagree with something you said? 1 2 3 4 5

4. About what percent will tell you when they feel impatient or irritated with something you said or did? 1 2 3 4 5

5. About what percent will tell you when they think you have changed the subject or become irrelevant? 1 2 3 4 5

6. About what percent will tell you when they feel hurt--rejected, embarrassed, or put down--by something you said or did? 1 2 3 4 5

7. Now, consider what you are willing to tell others on the faculty. About what percent of the others are you willing to tell when you don't understand something they have said? 1 2 3 4 5

8. About what percent of the others will you tell if you like something they have done or said? 1 2 3 4 5

9. About what percent of the others will you tell when you disagree with something they have said? 1 2 3 4 5

10. About what percent of the others will you tell when you think they have changed the subject or become irrelevant? 1 2 3 4 5

11. About what percent will you tell when you feel impatient or irritated? 1 2 3 4 5

12. About what percent will you tell when you feel hurt by something that they said or did? 1 2 3 4 5

Taken from the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire

COMPLAINTS CHECKLIST

1. Listen to all complaints whether they seem serious or not.
2. Be sure to listen calmly until the person has completed his description of the problem.
3. Be sure you have all the facts about the problem before you do anything.
4. Take action only if it is absolutely necessary and only after you have consulted all persons involved.
5. Encourage the person to handle the problem himself, if the situation dictates such action.
6. Don't pry into the person's personal problems.

Evaluate Your Supervisory Communication

Rate yourself on the following characteristics of good supervisory communication. Give yourself a 5 if you do this always, 4 usually, 3 sometimes, 2 rarely, 1 never.

_____ Give clear cut instructions.

_____ Keep everyone concerned with a decision fully informed on progress and actions taken.

_____ Consult his/her staff for ideas and promotes discussion.

_____ Elicit full facts and information before making decisions.

_____ Consult all those affected by a decision before finalizing it.

_____ Circulate informally among staff from time to time to communicate informally.

_____ Allocate communication time equitably to all his/her staff.

_____ Stimulate trust and openness among staff.

_____ Handle staff communications and decisions impartially.

_____ Exhibit enthusiasm.

50 points and you're a whiz of a communicator

25 points and you're a fair communicator

10 points and you'd better improve fast

NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION CHECKLIST

_____ Give the new staff member a tour of the building/office

_____ Introduce the new member to all the staff

_____ Be sure all personnel forms have been properly understood and taken care of by the new staff member

_____ Appoint experienced staff member to work closely with the new member for at least two weeks (including going to lunch together often)

_____ Provide the new member a written description of major job duties

_____ Provide the new member with a written set of school/office policies and procedures.

_____ Provide written instructions for any equipment for which the new staff member will be responsible

_____ Provide a written copy of your school/office goals and objectives for the year

_____ Establish within the first month of his/her employment the objectives of the new staff member for the coming year

_____ Carefully review any special rules

_____ Provide an orientation which stresses the relationship and importance of the new person's position to other positions in the district/school/office

_____ Find out a little about the employee as a person, and let him/her know you as a person

_____ Stress to him/her your desire to know and understand about any problem encountered on the job

_____ Be sure to elicit and respond to questions the employee may have

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